

From: ()
Sent: December 28, 2008 12:37 AM
To: MayorandCouncil
Subject: Snow removal during Xmas 2008 snowstorms

27 December 2008

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I would firstly like to congratulate the municipality for the effort made to remove snow from major roads in West Vancouver during the recent snowstorms in which each delivered significant amounts of snow. I live near the corner of 13th and Esquimalt Avenue, so was pleased that 13th Street was one of the roads designated for routine clearing. As a motorist, I could with my all-wheel drive vehicle, manage to get out of the lane onto 13th Street and other connecting major roads that had been cleared. I was also pleased to see buses plying their usual routes in my neighbourhood.

However, I try to cycle and walk as much as I can in response to the objectives of the 2004 District of West Vancouver Official Community Plan to reduce residents' dependency on private automobiles and promote alternatives to private vehicles, including the enhancement of walking and cycling networks. I did cycle a little after the first storm but decided it was too dangerous thereafter. The few times, over the past few days that I drove by car east on Marine Drive from 13th Street, I noticed that the only half of the cycling decal on the inside lane was visible - the other half buried in deep snow that had been ploughed over it. This didn't surprise me as it is what one would expect in an automobile-centric community.

What bothered me more was the safety hazard in un-cleared sidewalks in the high-density neighbourhood where I live. Not only was it hazardous walking on un-cleared or partly-cleared sidewalks, but I observed several instances where pedestrians were actually walking instead on the roadways, sometime oblivious to the cars trying to pass them. On two separate days, I walked from Ambleside to Park Royal and back on un-cleared sidewalks. Not only was it slippery, but each time found it inconvenient to have to step aside in the deeper snow from the narrow foot path to avoid other pedestrians on the sidewalk. I was pleased to see responsible shopkeepers and some homeowners and apartment dwellers clearing the sidewalks in front of their properties but while walking to and from the Community Centre today, I noted sidewalks around the Hollyburn School, Municipal Hall and near the Community Centre complex had been not been cleared.

I have two questions:

1. Is there a municipal policy with regard to clearing snow from sidewalks?
2. Does the municipality own any equipment designed to quickly and efficiently clear snow from sidewalks?

If the answer to question 2 is no, then I would suggest investing in at least one such unit and that a high priority be given to clearing those sidewalks in the business districts, around schools, public buildings and in the neighbourhoods with high density apartment dwellings.

Yours sincerely,

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